



Address by
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REGIONAL DIRECTOR
WHO EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN REGION
to the

**LAUNCH OF THE FINAL REPORT ON GAPS AND CHALLENGES RELATED TO
WOMEN'S HEALTH: PROSPECTS AND ASPIRATIONS IN JORDAN**

Amman, Jordan, 24 February 2015

Your Royal Highness, Your Excellency, Dear Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Your Royal Highness, your presence in this debate on how to shape the future of nursing and midwifery in the Region in order to strengthen and sustain health and contribute to the acceleration of universal health coverage is greatly appreciated and valued.

It is my great pleasure to join you today for the launch of the final report "Gaps and challenges related to women's health: prospects and aspirations in Jordan". This launch is being organized by the National Women's Health Care Center under the auspices of Her Royal Highness Princess Aisha Bint Al Hussein in order to strengthen maternal health care services in Jordan and consolidate support for equitable, accessible and good quality women's health services in Jordan.

As you are aware, Jordan is progressing well towards achieving the targets of Millennium Development Goal 5. This is the result of strong and sustained political commitment to avoiding preventable morbidity and mortality among women. As a reflection of that commitment, and through the dedicated efforts of Her Royal Highness Princess Aisha Bint Al Hussein, the National Women's Health Care Center was established in 2011 in order to improve the availability, accessibility and quality of comprehensive, evidence-based health services responding to women's needs.

Between May and November 2014, the Center conducted a series of consultations with Jordanian women to gather information on the health needs of women in the community. The findings of this investigation, including the gaps and challenges that were identified related to women's health, are being presented to you today through the launch of the report. WHO supports the relevance of these findings, which will contribute to efforts to ensure equitable access to good maternal health care services country-wide.

Dear Colleagues,

The WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean is giving priority to maternal health and is supporting countries in their efforts to provide all women with access to antenatal care in pregnancy, skilled care during childbirth, and care and support in the weeks after childbirth. To encourage countries to work on comprehensive national plans aiming at universal maternal health coverage with cost-effective interventions, the Regional Office in collaboration with UNICEF and UNFPA launched in January 2013 a regional initiative on saving the lives of mothers and children to accelerate progress towards MDGs 4 and 5. The event was attended by leading figures, including high-level officials from Member States who expressed strong political commitment and leadership to improve progress towards achieving Millennium Development Goals 4 and 5 by 2015.

All countries of the Region including Jordan have endorsed maternal health as a priority and have agreed to focus on scaling up support to areas where the burden of maternal mortality is heaviest. They have also agreed to join efforts with partners, civil society and communities to optimize the impact of maternal health interventions, and to target health system components including building health workforce capacity and ensuring access to quality maternal care and lifesaving medicines and interventions.

Ladies and Gentlemen

WHO considers women`s health as the physical, mental, social and psychological well-being of women at individual, family and society levels. This meeting is an opportunity to highlight the main gaps and barriers to women`s health and well-being. Lack of education, poverty, social inequity and lack of decision-making power are often factors leading to poor health among women. Health system factors also need to be taken into account to improve women`s health, and related interventions should focus on universal health coverage, prevention of health disparities, provision of quality of care with integrated reproductive and maternal health care, and strengthening preconception care for better women`s and family health.

This meeting also provides the opportunity to discuss the main issues raised by women themselves and to build recommendations that target these issues in order to tailor a package of maternal health services that meets the needs of Jordanian women.

On behalf of WHO, and of the mothers who will benefit from this commitment, I thank you for all you have achieved so far –and I look forward to hearing your deliberations and to working closely with you in delivering our commitments.